

VISIONS FROM AFAR

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*"Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge :
it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance
of all Science."*

—WORDSWORTH.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

VISION	. .	I
DAWN	. .	6
MUSIC	. .	12
WAR	. .	20
SHOW	. .	27
EVOLUTION	. .	32
GODS	. .	39
WORD	. .	48
LOVE	. .	53

PART II.

DREAM	. .	61
LIFE	. .	68
INFINITY	. .	75
ABSOLUTE	. .	83
ADVENT	. .	92
LITERATURE	. .	97
SILENCE	. .	116

PART I.

VISION.

I WAS at the beginning—I saw it all. When the night was passing—its mist and darkness disappearing, when the first streaks of light became visible and brooded over the uncreated infinite like the dove, I saw them. When the elements were taking a deep dive into that light-ocean, new and fresh, I saw them. There was flush on the face of the Creator, the halo which almost struck me blind. There was glory encircling and enveloping Him as he sat on the high throne with its blazing sapphires.

He commanded and the formless infinite began to assume shape and form—the airy nothings gradually took “local habitation and a name.” He stood and they all stood still in awe and obedience. He saw them, examined them. The infinite with its new infinite realities, new bodies and shapes, were yet finite to the Maker. They all were good. He looked and they bowed ; he spoke and they heard ; he touched them all with his feet and they felt a new life. The infinite Knowledge touched and the orbs knew their paths for the first time.

I saw how innumerable spheres crowded round Him at that moment—all, all below His feet. I saw how they vied with one another to kiss his feet, to take the last impetus to make them fit for moving through the void for infinite time. They were all obedient. The light of his feet was the garment, the covering to hide them. And they looked fresher and newer from the holy contact. Alas for that happy moment !

And the Creator said, "Move on, ye spheres, ye new creations : move on till the night out of which you are born—the elements of which you are composed, are subjected to a strong stormy exercise and assertion, and purged and purified. Move along your paths till the night of the beginning be supplanted by the glorious eternal day of the end. I give an angel to each of you to guide you in your way. They will sing in your journey all along and will keep you cheerful, and on earth as everywhere else this song will be heard only by the immortals." And he added, "My blessings shall be on you all."

Ah ! what a tremendous volcanic commotion was then, what a stormy, death-awakening sound ! All at a moment they left the centre, the formless night incorporated into tangibility and reality of the dawn, left the feet of the Almighty. How many small spheres then emanated from the bigger ones, how many lighted ones lost light and the dark ones

received it ! Oh ! it was a sight for the gods to see the creation at its birth—the infinite reality marching from the feet of the infinitely Mighty for infinite time.

And when the whirlpool was continuing and I in fear and awe closed my eyes and waited, when I was strongly and sincerely hoping that I—I alone should remain in the holy light and mine will not be the destiny to whirl round with the infinite new-made realities—when I was rather absorbed in such thoughts, I felt the air of a different region. It seemed that the clouds of glory that encircled me when with the creator gradually vanished. Something narrow and small, something limited, kept me bound within its own walls. I opened my eyes and was surprised to find myself within a “vesture of decay in a bourne of time and space”, placed on one of the spheres that I erstwhile saw at the foot of the Almighty. “Alas for the vision, alas for me ! When shall I view that Beatific

Vision once more ? or shall I view it at all ?”
cried I. And the self from within replied,
“Work, work till the elements of the night are
eliminated from thee and thou wilt see a
vision more glorious and exhilarating, the
vision of the eternal day. God is realising
Himself :

‘And though from this our bourne of
time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the BAR’.”

DAWN.

THOU art the most glorious part of the day, thou Dawn! As thou heraldest the approach of the daytime, so dost thou ring out the mist and the darkness of night. Thou art the borderline between the day and the night, a short existence and life between two bigger ones. The birds singing in a thousand blended melodies—the sun with its yellow disk preparing for his daily career—the sky gradually clearing itself of its tiny sparkles—the flower scenting in the garden all bedewed and besmeared—the earth shaking off its dull

slumber and the sea its calmness—all these meet in thee to endow thee with a glory and freshness that has hardly any parallel. And we poor men, the petty creatures—a section of the infinite creation—do we not feel at thy approach a new life and enthusiasm—a new energy that sleep truly yet imperceptibly infuses into our soul ?

And the dawn within ! Is it less sweet than the dawn without ? The soul of a man first receiving the new sunlight of love, inspiration and wisdom—the mind clearing itself of the mist of ignorance that envelops it—the raw ore first heated, and melting to separate from it the grosser elements—what are they but heralds of the dawn within ? If the seen dawn is grand and sweet, the unseen and the felt one is sweeter and grander. The first spark of love in a heart and the heart swelling in presence of the queen of hearts—“all air, all soul and form”—“like the sea swelling when once near its moon”—

the first sunshine of inspiration, that all consuming fire that puts to shade the "doubts and hazy visitations" of the soul or consumes them wholesale—the first moon-ray of cool calculating thought that reveals to the gross earth-made eye of men the existence of the grand inner world, and the first flight of imagination thrilling the soul like the call of the first cuckoo of spring singing from the far away bosom of a chancefound island of the ocean—revealing in one word heaven on earth—are they not dawns in the spiritual world of men?—Dawns that make man completely forget his outer physical existence and make him a dweller of the world within? Does he not in moments of such happy dawns "shuffle off this mortal coil" this "muddy vesture of decay" and hear enraptured the song of the Sirens of the soul? As the physical dawn heralds the approach of a physical day, so does the mental dawn herald forth the approach of a more glorious day—

a day where the physical is translated and transformed and presents itself as a mass volatile, indeed, so much so that like the concentration of some acids it may vanish into air at any moment of its existence.

And when did that noble dawn first begin—the dawn that heralded to the first man the first approach of Light—the dawn whose fruits have come and are yet to come? When was it that the first man first felt the holy halo of the spiritual and was electrified with new life and light—I mean, the dawn of human civilization of which we know very little and about which enquiry yields nothing?

And that one great universal dawn—the light that was in the beginning and heralded the approach of the Universe—the dawn when the infinite rolling spheres of the creation first emanated from the Darkness Eternal—were allotted their own individual ways in the infinite void—the stars

and the infinite known and unknown bodies that constitute the Universe—when was it ? How was it ? Who rang it in ? And who will ring it out ? What heavenly birds sang then ? And what glorious flowers blossomed ? Will Imagination with its seraphwings give us the truth ? Will Thought with its deeply penetrating eye give us any idea and any knowledge of this ? As the physical man is infinitesimally small to the infinite physical universe, so is the spiritual man too small to think, feel or imagine the time when the grand Spiritual first began to assume body and shape and the dawn of the physical began. Yet a faithful soul feels this—feels that it is in midst of a great dawn that we are living—we and all—of a dawn like the small one that follows our own night, like one that clears off the mist of ignorance within us. And after it will come the day when none will be allowed work. The activities of the actual so clear and vivid

now—so perceptible and real, are to the man who looks from afar, a vision—no more real than a wave swelling in the “moonlit solitude mild of the midmost ocean”. The actual, to the infinite, is only foaming for a moment to be gone in a moment once more.

‘We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep !’

We were in the eternal night, are awaiting the eternal day. The middle is a dawn, not a dream. It is only the dawn that is ours and we have got to make the best of it.

MUSIC.

WHEN wert thou born thou divine art of music ? Whose was that happy inspiration that first bodied thee forth ? Wert thou a hand-maid of poetry as thou seemest to be now—born at the same time and at the same birth as that wonderful elevating agent of the human soul ? Or wert thou something separate, something different with a different life and individuality that addest glory to the barren monotony of lifeless words to make them what we call poetry ?

We see thee and hear thee everywhere.

The birds sing in a thousand blended notes all the year round—the river glides forth at its sweet will in sweet and lulling murmur towards the sea and the leaves of the trees in the bright sunshine of a spring morning—what fine music do they produce when the wind flows past through them ! As for man, does he not express or attempt to do so even the commonest of his sincere and concentrated feelings, emotions and thoughts in music ? To the question, Where is music ? one might answer, Where is not music to one who has ears to hear ? And do we not hear of the music of the spheres—the harmony produced by the flying orbs as they revolve past through the infinite void below and above ? Music has a force, a wonderful force to penetrate “like the flying flames of the air” through the human soul in spite of its “muddy vesture of decay”.

Infinite are thy ways—infinite the perceptions that thou givest to the human soul.

Thy power is wonderful if not magical. To the weary thou givest thy energy, to the heavy-hearted thy lightness and to languor thy vigor. Is there a forgetfulness and abstraction sweeter than that of music ? Are you fainting, dispirited, disturbed in thought and in despair ? Go to music ; you will find peace. Are you hopeful, ambitious, desirous of victory, glory or love ? Music will redouble the energy within. There is no latent feeling, no latent emotion, no latent fancy, imagination or thought that music will not kindle. Was not the great Alexander moved to various passions at the same time by the same magic lyre ? Does not even the serpent, the vilest of reptiles as Christians call it, sell its natural freedom for music ? Remember what the Pied Piper of Hamelin did—how he drew the whole host of rats of the village into the river and yawn in wonder.

And why is music so sweet ? Why of all the products of art does it please us so

well ? The Sirens sang and the crew of Odysseus were wrecked : Orpheus sang and the dark king of death, Pluto, gave him back his wife : Timotheus sang and the great Alexander went mad with various passions ; the muses sang from the height of Parnassus and the Greeks idolised and worshipped them. And the great *Gandharbas* of the Hindu Mythology—half-men half-gods—were they not such singers as sang in the court of gods and by whose songs even the immortals were captivated ?

These are all “heard musics” and are sweet. But those “unheard” are yet sweeter. The music that is reflected from the bosom of a lover to his beloved, from the heart of a mother to her children, from the soul of a friend to that of his friend and a thousand other like musics of the inner world in men, are they not silent yet superb musics of the “unheard” kind vibrating in the sweetest possible unison—sometimes in direct and sometimes in

sympathetic vibration ? But the still sweeter music—the music that the soul feels as underlying, as it were, every individual atom of the creation, the music within the sights and sounds all round—is it not all an echo from the soul proving conclusively that all in the creation are of one kith and kin composed of one essential Essence which was with the Creator before creation ? What are martyrs and great men who dedicate their life for a great cause but people in whom this echo is the strongest and this music vibrates most in unison ? The deepest of thoughts, the sublimest of imaginations, the most exhilarating of emotions—desire of life and freedom—do they not all strike a strong sympathetic chord all round, the moment they find voice from an individual ? And the cruel heartless people hardly recognising, yet, not unoften killing the outbursts of the soul in whatever form they might show themselves—are they not those in whom Music is most in

disharmony and disconnection? Note but what Shakespeare says,

‘The man that hath no music in himself

Nor is not moved with concord of sweet

sound,

Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils’.

And feel how deeply spiritual the soul of Shakespeare, which sometimes is denied spirituality, was.

Yes: these are so and the truth of them can hardly be challenged. The root is not far to seek and is within the reach of souls in whom the best of tunes have vibrated most in concord. As the ocean is made up of infinite particles of water that rise and fall in various permutations and combinations, as the earth is made up of infinite molecules giving birth to infinite created beings in different methods of grouping, sorting and adjustment, so is the creation an inconceivable, unimaginable aggregate of innumerable small tunes assuming different forms of

expression in different units of it. The whole universe is but a sum total of infinite small tunes of infinite variety each having a real distinct individuality of its own but only combining with another in ways that are different. And this little existence between two eternities is but passing of one great harmony through a small disharmony to a similar harmony once more, when the tunes will be all, all in sympathy and unison. The middle is but the noise and cracking of in-harmonious tunes of which the whole universe is the manifestation. They will collapse and lose themselves completely in the big harmony of the end when God will have realised Himself completely. From harmony—from divine harmony, began the universal frame “as a brand plucked forth of a pyre,” and such harmony is now only in immortal souls. The more one can free himself from the “muddy vesture of decay”—the more his spirit can absorb the physical—the better will

be the tunes in unison in him and the better will be the perception, appreciation and enjoyment of the universal divine harmony which was and which will be. It is not poetry that makes music but it is music that makes poetry as all other arts, and the closer a soul is to the Essence of music, the surer is its hope for immortality.

WAR.

I know thee, War, and am not afraid of thee. As cold is bearable to men at the poles—heat to the people of the desert, so art thou bearable to me. Thou art full of dread, full of terror. But on my soul thy terrors fall flat.

The history of men shows many actions of thee. If the history of other creatures could be recorded, many more actions of thee would come to light. But I do not search the entrails of history. I do not seek thy causes in history like great historians; I have not

much faith in the theory that holds that knowledge of wars can prevent future ones. Thy root is far deeper, far more beneath the depth to which we penetrate to know it. Thou art not here and there, at this time or at that time, under this condition or that. But thou art every-where—omnipresent in the creation and guidest and rulest every unit of it.

There were people on earth who did not record their history. The reason is not that they had not the power to see its importance : far otherwise : the reason is they valued history at its true value, recognised it as only one form of war in human society. They had the power to be conscious of the war within, they could feel its existence thoroughly. They knew how history forms itself, could read history in trees, historical sermons in running brooks. To them speech was not all-important. They could conceive of thee through silence—such people had no essential need of human history for their enlightenment.

And what is history but war ? The war of a nation with a nation, of a king with a king, of a religion with another, of one man with a second and a third. Omit war from history—men will not read it. Give less importance to it—men would lose much of their enthusiasm for it : pass it by as a thing of no importance, history will be intolerable. War is, in one word, the soul of history. Take it off—you may throw the rest into the dust-bin.

So is literature a war—a war of the pleasurable elements with the other ones of the mind—a war to put the worst experiences of life behind and to bring the best ones forward. This war began long ago, is being continued even now with admirable success ; when it will end no body knows.

And philosophy : is it not a most tremendous war begun from the dawn of civilization and continued in the midst of various fortunes to the present time ? Is it

not a great war between ignorance and knowledge—a severe struggle of Truth to triumph over the delusions of falsehood and to assert itself fully ? Plato and Socrates may be no more, but the war they inaugurated has been continued till to-day.

And science : was there a greater war—ever declared by man against man ? It is a war with Nature—the store-house of all forces—whose ultimate end is no less than making a slave of her or creating a second nature, if possible. What she can do, we also can. Sometimes we can do better. And for this ‘better’ we shall make her serve us. We may die, we may cause death, we may be heartless and blind to all other things, but we must have one thing—a mastery over the laws of nature. You say they are infinite. It is better to fight for the infinite—to die for it than to live in the poor limit of the finite. And so science is a great war declared against the Mother of all.

Music, painting, sculpture—are they not all wars declared by the best elements of the mind against the worst ones—sometimes for the absorption and sometimes for the annihilation of the latter ? Think and you will know.

But the most tremendous of all wars—the war that surpasses in intensity all other kinds of human war—nay, comprises them all, and arranges on its side the best generals of all others—is the war of religion. Religion is a war of virtue with sin—of the divine with the hellish—of heaven with hell—of God with Satan. The great thunder of Messiah—the full power of the soul freed from all bonds and shackles must be used for it—otherwise the field will remain for the party of Satan.

But the root of all wars—human and non-human—where is it ? Has anyone ever dived into its depth and seen how and where it is ? You cannot say it is in philosophy or science or religion individually—you cannot

say it is confined to any particular sphere. Yet like the thread the jewels—this root, this main thread, composed as it is of the smallest fibres, connects all wars historical or otherwise. In human society, considered as something separate from nature, this war is in individual man. So complex, so confused are his powers that they are no more possible of separation than the seeds that Venus gave Psyche. It is the individual dissension in man, the quarrel constantly going on within human soul, that assumes the gigantic appearances of historical philosophical, religious or other wars. An individual fibre cannot bind a butter-fly. Bound together these fibres can bind the dragon in his den. The dissension is not really between a nation and a nation, a caste and another or between one religion and a second: but it is within the mind of man which in different combinations of its powers assumes different aspects at different times in the midst of different circumstances and environments.

It is a fact which civilization ought to know and feel.

And taking man as a portion of Nature—a section of the creation—where is the root of the wars appearing in various forms in various units of the creation which make great poets sometimes speak of Nature herself as “red in tooth and claw” ? Is it not in the bosom of the Creator Himself—as it is in the bosom of the creation ? When this war, this disharmony began, we do not know. When it will end is more than we can know. But it is man’s special privilege and fortune that he can try and try successfully for himself—for the ending of the war within his own soul to a considerable extent. Man may end his war when he reaches perfection. He can do only a little more. He may pray that the Creator may end the great War within His soul. All wars human or otherwise will vanish like a dream when He would do this.

SHOW.

How long wilt thou betray man thou Show ! When wilt thy play end ? As time passes off, thou progressest too. Thou lookest neither to the right nor to the left ; but with one inviolable, inevitable motion advancest forward.

Thou coverest like a garment all the elements of man's mind and showest thyself first. An honour for thee seems to be deeply rooted in human soul. One fashion succeeds another, one habit a second, and ever as thou progressest, thou leavest a heap of ruins and refuse behind thee—ruins which were thy

ladder but which thou disownest at every step to pretend that thou hast attained thy upper rounds without them. Thus thou livest, "in perpetual metamorphoses", in fairer and still fairer developments and evolutions. Nay, sometimes, thou with thy ever-changing transitory appearances seemest to be all-important, all-real and in thyself an object of reverence and worship for mankind. Do we not see amongst us "solemnities lingering as ceremonies, sacred symbols as idle pageants when all life and vitality has gone out of them"

The whole world is busy with Show. For Show men seem to live, for Show not unoften they die. The soul within is rotten, a small hell where the prototypes of all the elements of the biggest one dwell : but the body outside must ever be fresh and glaring, covered with ever-new and attractive clothes. Thus as one man presents himself before another, one nation before a second, one religion before a second and a third, ever they busy

themselves to put on a halo of Show round them. Alas ! how far is Reality from us !

But what need we cite instances ? Thou art as infinite as the sands of the sea, the herbs of the mountain and the stars of the heaven. The collective knowledge of men in various spheres of their activity—their science, philosophy, literature and the holy name of religion—what else is this but a transitory show, a wave on the surface of the ever-flowing stream of human civilization ! Again, are not the earth and all that we see round it a show ? The bright sun, the twinkling stars, the sublime mountain heights that give men a glimpse of the Infinite—are they not all shows ? Are they not inhabited by some kinds of creatures—some man, some animal, some tree—though they may differ in their characteristics from the creations on earth ? Does not evil, the unexplained and unexplainable problem that ever deludes human soul, exist even there ? Are they free from all

forms of war ? Or is not nature there, too, "red in tooth and claw" ? And yet they all look beautiful and grand ! What are they, then, but big shows—pageants to betray man's feeling as long as he has not delved into wisdom's depth ?

And why do we speak of this thing or of that ? Why take things part by part ? Is not the infinite congregation of atoms—this infinite universe—a big show on the bosom of Eternity ? Dost thou not Show, brood over the face of the Infinite like the dove ? Human time, human custom, human idea of space—indeed, all the forms of relative human feelings and imaginations—are they not so many shows on the breast of the ocean of Eternal Time ? And as truly as fashion is a show, behaviour is a show, human idea of time and space a show, so truly is the great universe with all its activities a show—a transitory show like unto a flash of unsnatched inspiration in a poet—like unto an unknown

and unknowable wave swelling in the "moonlit solitude mild on the midmost ocean"—from out of the bosom of the Almighty. The philosophy of clothes, as Carlyle thought, is really the soul and essence of all other philosophies of men.

When this great show will end, no one knows, no one can imagine. Man is only a minnow in a creek of this vast show-ocean of the creation. Yet inspite of this, his aim is great. It is to recognise and feel through the deepest, purest and sublimest of the experiences of the soul that all is not show, that behind the greatest as also the smallest of shows of the creation and the various forms of them, there stands a stern truth and reality guiding and moulding them; and that through every star, every grass-blade, every living soul and its varied activities—indeed, through every individual unit of the great Show, the guiding genius of a glorious God constantly rules.

EVOLUTION.

THOU art all in all, Evolution, omnipresent in all human culture and thought—in all matters physical and spiritual. We look at nature, there thou art ever present. The meanest creature is an evolution from a still meaner one. The meanest floweret of the vale—the violet—is not what it was a thousand years ago. The swallow ‘twittering from the straw-built shed,’ has changed its feathers, nay, its tone and the sweetest note that thrills the gale, is not the production of a day. Was not the earth itself once a heap of such elements

as existed in chaos and have taken a 'local habitation and a name' only through thee ? Are the sun, the moon, the stars in any way better ? The scientist examines the crust of the earth. He finds thee there and can roughly estimate when this crust first began to assume body and shape. Let him examine the ingredients of the sun and the other heavenly bodies as he is attempting now. He will find the same law even there.

Look at the different branches of human activity, physical and mental. What are they but pure and unqualified evolutions ? They may sometimes have risen and sometimes fallen in their course as the crest and the trough in the wave. But who can deny that science, philosophy, religion, &c, nay, even the very language which embodies them, are all subjects of that one universal spirit which guides all—from the first created element to the most evolutioned of all evolutioning creations which may be man ? If man could as

clearly see the root-history of things in nature both here and elsewhere, as he can the root-history of the various spheres of human activity—physical as well as spiritual—he could see one real spirit slowly yet surely guiding from behind the whole outward scene of grandeur—which is the universe : he would in wonder cry out “EVOLUTION” ! The most non-progressive things of the creation are progressing—have evolutions both as wholes and in parts. Only clear away the illusion of time, space and custom with the cool moon-light of deep thought—you will see.

When didst thou first begin—thou ruling genius of the creation ? How long will the creation continue to pay its obeisance to thee as its master ? Some consider thee purely physical, move heaven and earth, exhaust all powers of thought, imagination, knowledge and research to represent thee as such. Shallow race of men that sees only the surface of hard

ice above and has not the inward eye to view the everflowing stream that flows beneath it ! Let them call man an evolution from the monkey or any other quadruped. Yet do they regard evolution as something real and thus make some contribution to the realisation of Truth.

And is the doctrine of Pythagoras after all so foolish ? Is it unthinkable and unimaginable that a man's soul should ever pass into a pigeon or a pigeon's should pass into a man ; and man, therefore, ought to hesitate before he kills a pigeon ? What with higher perception and better knowledge we may know, with little of them we can not. Try to realise the course of the one great universal Evolution of which others are but parts ; put all your thoughts, all your imagination to conceive of it. Most of the possibles will seem impossible and impossibles otherwise ; and you will worship Pythagoras as a man with a divine insight.

That chaos existed before creation—chaos where “the hot, the cold, the moist and the dry fought for supremacy—a dark illimitable ocean without bound, without dimension,” men need not doubt. That light first and other things next evolved out of chaos we may believe. But may we not conceive of a stage in the evolution of the creation which existed before chaos? May we not conceive that before the different and antagonistic elements fought in the bosom of chaos, they were created peaceful companions round the hearth of the same Parent—each exactly of the same nature, same size, and above all, of the same spirit as another, just evolved out of the one uniform Sameness which is the Bosom of the Creator? Is it too much to imagine that all atoms of the creation when they were first created had the same appearance and exactly the same soul—that if they quarrelled with one another in an intermediate stage in the history of the creation in chaos, it is because

by Evolution their nature was changed then ? Is it too much to conceive of the universe with all its systems as progressing in a spiri-
tuo-physical evolution whose end will be total absorption of the physical ? These atoms are quarrelling even now though their aim is directed once more towards friendliness. And thus it is that God realises Himself. They misused the Free Will which was granted them at the beginning—ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree—and have followed different lines of activity through their own freedom of will.

Their bodies, their shapes, their natures have all undergone changes and born of the same Parent with all His characteristics in miniature, they can hardly recognise each other any more than a brother can recognise a brother after an interval of fifty years. But the same essence throbs in every soul—the brother's soul feels a sensation as it sees a second in the point of the sword. We admire

thee, Evolution, thou couldst do so much. We shall admire thee still more when thou wilt once more merge all into one and the Show shall end—for we shall be present at the end as we were at the beginning. We wish a happy end of thee.

GODS.

WHAT are ye, you gods ? Why have you got such a charm round your name ? Those who admit your physical existence admire you, those who do not admit any such thing revere at least the name, stamp a man of superhuman powers with the name. Have you left nothing but a name on earth to commemorate you—nothing but a transient word to implore the passing tribute of a sigh ?

Time was when you were all in all—when even your semblance was revered. The

forces of nature were personified and styled gods; the minor characteristics of man's mind were conceived as definite entities with separate existence and were represented as gods. The powers of the mind, inspiration, imagination, thought—the greediness for wealth and prosperity, were all personified and worshipped as gods. Men possessing extraordinary powers were said to be inspired with godliness. But those days are gone. The old world has changed yielding place to a new one. You are now by some condemned, by other faintly recognised, by another section again only remembered as a phenomenon which may help the study of the evolution of mind. You abused yourselves—lost all glamour surrounding you and became mechanical, you secured in your company the vice-gods, allowed as it were a sort of indulgence to yourselves. And the moment the contamination was perceived, you had to vanish, at least physically.

Hindu mythology presents thirty-three crores of gods—Greek mythology, a smaller number. It is difficult to count the angels of the Christian heaven, who must have been gods. They are broadly classified into so many as nine classes. But the present civilisation with its lion force has scared all these gods into the dens of the dragons where they have got to look for themselves. Some of the moderns forgetting all sense of decorum, all sense of the evolution of the mind, which they feign to respect, go to the hellish meanness of throwing the relics of the past into dustbins. Shallow race of men ! who only see the to-day and the events of to-day, who have neither the insight to see the past nor the foresight to see future. Can they do any work of reform—any permanent service to the soul of men ?

We know there were once gods : we know that our ancestors with all their knowledge—all their spiritual insight worshipped

them. We know they sometimes went to the length of sacrificing themselves and their nearest and dearest ones on the altar of these gods. We now condemn them as superstitious. We say their spiritual vision was limited—they saw only the immediate cause and never penetrated into the ultimate: we are a better race of men than they—soar in a higher plain—nearer the millenium and the Absolute. They were weak—dispirited, so much short-sighted that were they given a new birth in our generation they would worship us. They called thunder and lightning an instrument of God—one with which God drove Satan out into hell. And have we not, with the element of thunder, made for ourselves the faithfulest and sincerest of servants and workers?

So the gods go and the pantheons are broken down. But have they vanished for ever, sunk into the depths of oblivion never, never to rise again? Have their personalities

melted altogether into the thin atmosphere all round ? Or do their spirits hover over the earth—imperceptible yet real—invisible yet active ? Or will they act in their death with the spirit like Cæsar more powerfully than with their short actual physical existences on earth ? Are they really something of the past—something that died a complete death or can they die at all ? These are questions that perplex the human thinker.

To us it seems that the gods are gods and as such are immortal. They visit our earth, our great physical universe—nay, are here and could be nowhere else. Their existence is bound up with the existence of the world and their life with world's life. Do I fall into a hyperbole when I say they are the souls of the physical universe and in some form or other, helping forward the great evolution in it—that they cannot die and have no fear of death ? The gods are here with you, with me, with every creation here

on earth as in the whole universe. They are on the breast of the ocean, on the summit of the hills and they permeate through and through the infinite sky above. When you do a good action, who propels you? When the mother kisses her child in affection, who propels her? When the mighty oak bends down with the wind to kiss the soft creeper winding round his breast, who gives him love? And above all when a soul awed with the glory and wonder of existence looks heavenward for the King of heaven, who is it that guides it? Are not the sense of the beautiful and sublime—the feeling of charity and benevolence—the wholehearted devotion and martyrdom for something noble—are not they all bodies and shapes, “the local habitation and a name,” that the very spirit of gods sometimes assumes for the healthy exercise of men’s spiritual self? Whether such feelings and imaginations are social or individual, general or particular,

they are new editions of the old gods who with time and with the evolution of human mind have changed their bodies and forms. Verily the scripture says that the angels could take any shape that they chose—could appear before men in any appearance they liked.

But I go still further. I say that the gods have not only a particular shape for a particular age—a particular clothing to dress themselves for a particular generation of men, but that they can, if they choose, assume those very bodies and shapes which they had in the past, and can in those very forms be worshipped. Gods are gods and will ever be so till up to the end of time. Did they not drink nectar in the Beginning? The moment you limit their power—give them spheres beyond which they cannot venture, you take off from them their most essential characteristic—the very godliness itself. As they can be here and there at the same

moment, so can they be this and that at the same time. Or is it too much to say that it is the gods who even now with their own force and strength are leading the understrings of the universe and thus guiding the destiny of men also ? Should they not therefore be worshipped by men in all ages under all circumstances ? In whatever form we worship them, they will ever come to us and help us forward both physically and spiritually. Even the devils were once gods and if we fear them at all in whatever form they may exist, we fear them because they were once so.

It is then no sin to worship gods individually—no sin to recognise that in the creation there is not one God but there are infinite gods who may, if they choose, in the case of an individual man, combine to deify him to make him a god and worthy of reverence. And what is that one universal God which the present generation of men so venerates—the Ruler of infinity for

infinite time—but one immense aggregate of these smaller gods—a compound where the constituent elements, though invisible and imperceptible, are individually present ? Do not hate the gods of the Pagans, do not look down upon them. Your one God, your one without a second, is but a divine compound which you cannot fully recognise without that process of spiritual analysis and vision which requires cultivation in its own way. Respect the gods of others whether past or present, recognise them as real. Your one God, “the One without a second” will be the nearer for it.

I worship you, gods ! I shall worship you all through life at all times under all circumstances. Only teach me to recognise you—to see and feel you with my inner vision and I shall ever remain a devotee. They say there is no god but God. I say, with all the emphasis that I can command, *there are gods as there is God.*

WORD.

WHAT a wonderful power thou possessest, thou Word ! What a great influence is with thee ! Thou seemest so common, so trite and so insignificant and yet it is thou who hast made every thing that we call ours possible. We use thee every moment ; create thee whenever we like. There is nothing cheaper than the creation of a word when an occasion arises. And yet when well used, well connected and well "circumstanced," a word can move the ocean, heave the hills and shake the human society to its roots. And

was it not a word—the word ‘whore’—that shattered the soul of the divine Desdemona, made her die the mental death before she died the physical one? Not unoften we find in life that “in the word is a man’s life and his breath and in the word his death.”

There are some who say that there is beauty in words, that examined carefully, words reveal glories of various kinds. They see in individual words—history, philosophy, poetry and many things more. According to them there is no beauty, no sweetness and light of which human soul is capable, which words studied in all their relations to life cannot show.

And yet what are words but imperfect symbols of ideas, thoughts and emotions—grooves that attempt to bind the intangible and the infinite to something finite? Can the word ‘tree’ give us an ample expression of the ideas that it contains? Are such words as love, hatred, jealousy, eternity,

symbols to any extent sufficient for the ideas that they embody ? They say, "What is in a name ? A rose will remain a rose whatever name one might give it." And yet, what is not in a name ? If words are used without any regard to their history and tradition, without any reference to the ideas and things that they have signified so long, the whole civilisation will have to be begun anew. Did the word 'word' itself sufficiently convey all that it is now intended to convey when it was created or coined ? Could the maker of it imagine what infinite meanings it would gradually acquire for itself, how it would signify everything from the meanest of creations, to the highest of all conceivable ideas—the idea of the Divinity ?

And what have not these words done for mankind ? All that we are proud of, every piece of knowledge physical or spiritual, every experience social or individual, in fact every thing that gives us a superiority to

the other sections of the creation, ultimately owes its origin to our power of expression. Our religion, philosophy, literature and science—our all—where would they have been without words, without the means of expression ? Carlyle speaks of three illusions. There is a fourth and this is the most powerful. It is the illusion of words ; it is this which has made other illusions possible and it is this again which shows them all in all their significances.

And is not the whole universe in one sense but a Word ? Are not all its units but so many alphabets ? Is it not a symbol of the infinite Power expressing, exercising and asserting itself in infinite number of ways ? It may be that all these individual units, all these letters are “celestial hieroglyphs” and that they who can truly decipher even one of them are prophets and gods. And yet the whole is but a Word—one immeasurable expression of the infinite

spiritual that is at its root and is its originator. Read but the first lines of the Scriptures and you will be convinced of the truth : "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God".

I worship thee, Word ! I may not understand thee in all thy forms and phases. I can yet be an admirer and a devotee. Amongst the thousands of lyres through which thou revealest thyself, make me one. Thou art not so trite and insignificant as thou seemest, but hast infinite powers and possibilities in thee.

LOVE.

Who is more common, yet, more glorious than thou, oh Love ! Who is more divine ? Thou art with everyone here on earth, with the rich as with the poor, with the high as with the low. Thou knowest no prejudice, no distinction. But to thy votaries ever art the gift of their desire.

We often wonder why men should be so much a creature of thee, why, when they worship thee, they forget all other gods. Kings and beggars run equally mad in love. Yet Love has made and unmade them so

often, sometimes exalted and sometimes ruined her sincerest votaries.

“Strong kings and goodly with gold
Thou hast found out arrows to pierce ;
And made their kingdoms and races
As dust and surfs of the sea”.

To the young Love is heaven. Her wings “make light in the air as the wings of a dove.” Youth is a time when the positive in man runs mad for the negative and *vice versa*—when the unfilled soul where separation has, as it were, been treasured up from time immemorial seeks its fulfilment. There is nothing that a sincerely loving young man or woman cannot do for love. And loss in love is bitter as death. Life seems to own no value after it. Romeo and Juliet, Hero and Leander died for love. To one who has loved sincerely and failed in love, the only sweet thing is to die.

Defeat and disappointment in love—he alone knows it who has felt it. It is the severest

shock that life can receive, the shock that altogether blights up the life in youth—or gives it a totally different course. Thus it was failure in love that gave the vision of the Infinite to Teufelsdröckh, it was love that raised Dante to the level of Beatrice—the divinity of soul personified, where he was granted “perfect pardon which is perfect peace.” So, as “Love and Anguish” sometimes “walk side by side the downward slope to death,” so do they not unoften walk side by side the upward slope to heaven.

How wide and various are the powers and perceptions of Love! How strong are they! Man is a doll in Love’s hand to dance to any motion she would put him to. She would lead one to hell and he would die in a street brawl or a tavern. She would lead another to heaven: and he will there be face to face with the Beatific Vision, would receive the blessings of eternal life and knowledge as Dante or Christ did. And the

gulf is vast, the gulf that separates a Juliet from a Cleopatra, and a Dante from a Byron or a Christ from a Judas.

Infinite are the forms and shapes that Love assumes. The love of a friend for a friend, of a man for a maid, of a mother for the child, of a patriot for a nation, of a poet for the sights and sounds of nature, what are they but different manifestations of one powerful deity who, like light in prisms of different inclinations and shapes, shows herself in different forms under different conditions. And the divinest form of love, the love for the Divinity himself in a human soul, how grand and noble is it ! We see in such a soul "the splendour of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth like a light shining in great darkness."

And why is this so ? Why of all the passions of the soul Love is so powerful and over-mastering ? Why is it that without experiencing it in some form or other, without

success or failure in the struggle for it, man cannot sink to any depth into the ocean of the spiritual ? And why is it that all other passions, all other emotions and feelings pay their homage, nay, sometimes surrender themselves completely to this one supreme deity of Love ? The more we attempt to find the answer, the more are we carried to depths unfathomable. Mary died as she went to call the cattle home on the eve of a storm : it was for love. Juliet died in the full flush of her youthful glory : it was for love. Millions lost their lives in the great European War : it was for love : Christ died on the cross and this too was for Love. Love thus wields a mighty sway over us and makes puppets of us all. But why is this so ? Can no one give an answer to this question, delve into that divine depth of truth where alone an answer of this can be obtained ?

Yes : the answer is difficult but not impossible. It is not impossible for a soul where

the love-web is in its finest condition. To such a soul it is better for a man to love sincerely and to lose, than never to love at all, though love may cause endless distraction and dismay. For man is only exalted by such experience. As the finest of textures is that which is woven thoroughly with the smoothest and finest of fibres, as the sweetest of songs is the most perfect combination of an infinite number of melodious tunes in unison, so is the soul most blest with Love—the soul of a Christ or a Dante—one in which the healthiest fibres of Love meet in the dearest possible combination. The whole universe is only a gigantic structure composed of infinite love-webs, each of which again is a composition and a product of the fibres of Love combining in different groups, proportions, and forms,—a sudden emanation from that great fountain source of love whom we otherwise call God. The greater the fineness and beauty of the individual threads and the better the process and

order of their meeting and combination—the higher the creation. And if man is superior to other units of the creation, it is simply because he has more of these fibres in a purer state in the web that is himself than any of them, because the making of the web, so far as he is concerned, is better and more perfect; or in other words, because he is a more finished product of Love. With others love is mostly physical—with him alone she may be spiritual—the very basis on which his superiority is founded. Love is not an evil blossom born “of sea-foam and the frothing of blood, bloodred and bitter of fruit”; but she is a delight of the world, a power that attracts and exalts man from the earth of the physical to the paradise of the spiritual—a sustaining fire woven through the whole “web of being” and burning the brightest only in man.

PART II

DREAM.

WHERE were they going, the noble, adventurous company ? Why were they so swift and so earnest on their journey ? Were they going to a place which would vanish into nothingness if they arrived not in time ? Or were they afraid of any impending, irremovable block that would bar their way if they were late ? They were ever eager, ever alert, proceeding without rest, without recreation whitherward I knew not. I heard from their mouths chits and chats of various kinds which I could hardly understand. I found them

bold and active, lively and enthusiastic, never looking back (nor it seemed to the front) but proceeding right onward. Rocks rising between them over-awed them—thunder cracked from rock to rock—the scorching rays of the summer sun plagued them with sore thirst, but still were they marching forward in right earnest, looking as it were for a place where they might find rest and rest for ever.

I saw among them sections and factions divided from each other by rocks insurmountable ; I saw wide rivers separating one section from another. I saw also in their midst agonies and disease, panic and pestilence, destruction and death. But onward they marched and advanced despite all these, where—into which bourne unknown—they alone might know.

Who guided them, wouldst thou know ? They had in their rank and file men of light and leading—geniuses who seemed to know the way. Among the myriads bound for the pilgrimage (for such it seemed) there

were some who could be distinguished—some who had signs and features of their own to know them from others. They trampled all obstacles under foot, nay, made the way easy and smooth. They had no fear of sorrows and sufferings, of panic and pestilence, of desolation or destruction. They did not fear death and seemed as spirits born to live for all time.

These leaders could be distinctly seen. I counted them—noted their features and habiliments—glorious forms to whom the followers bowed in awe and reverence from time to time. They moved through the rank, recalled the stragglers and refreshed the out-worn. They filled up the gaps in the files and strengthened the wavering line. One held out direct promise of the happy land and stood guarantee for it; another taught the followers to be steady, orderly and straight-forward and hoped that the better land would once be in sight; a third again led his followers imperceptibly and stealthily, led them while he himself seemed

to be led, and made them altogether ignorant of the long journey and the tedium of it. A fourth again bewildered them with his exhilarating shows of immense power within and without,—shows that so much attracted and absorbed that the followers never had to feel the trouble of asking him where he was leading them. They marched forward, yes, all of them did so, and the glorious galaxy led the way.

I could not ask them all I had to ask, but I attempted to meet the leaders and to know a bit from each. I found them all hopeful. They were obliging. They explained to me their ways and methods, their advantages and disadvantages on the way. They told me of the experiences they had encountered on their way before I met them. I could understand some fully, some half and others again seemed altogether abstruse. But that does not matter ; they knew their own way and proceeded forward.

The followers, as I said, were a curious company. Some laughed at me, some rebuked me as an idle renegade who changed his course and mission and was coming back from the goal which was their aim. Others again would not even allow me a talk with their leader ; they were impatient, often fanatical ; I was careful, for as the circumstances stood, they might assault me any moment, if I went awry.

From among them one came—a tall, gaunt figure—who seemed to recognise me, but whom I could hardly recognise. I asked him where was he going and he said he did not know. He only was following some others. He added there were many with him who were like himself, who neither thought nor felt, but only marched and followed a beaten track. I was surprised that they were people like me. I simply followed till when the goal seemed near, came “the gaunt and taciturn host” telling me there was no room in his palace for one like me—one who

simply walked but did not know the way. I told this man my story and my fate. He was not satisfied. He did not pay any heed to my narrative but went his way. And I muttered within myself, "Alas for mankind if such a march were to continue for eternity."

I saw them for a whole day, sometimes I talked and sometimes noticed their features; and the night fell. I took rest in an inn where there was none else—where very few liked to live even for a night. They took me to be a pessimist, a fool who could turn back. Above all, they ridiculed me as a hunter of novelty. I could not sleep. I was musing on what I saw and heard. And at midnight when the world was silent and the company asleep, when there was only the broad blue sky with its stars at the top and the dark atmosphere below and the mighty heart of the creation seemed to be lying still, I saw a spirit descending slowly through my windows. He came to my room in all his heavenly glory and freshness and told

me when I was almost senseless for fear, "Don't be awed, don't be deluded. Thou hast hit the truth. The followers before thee cannot go very far. Late or soon they must recede. They have neither felt nor realised and the goal is not theirs. But all is not hopeless. Once will they see the truth, for man is not doomed for eternity." I trembled, and had no reply to make and the dream left. I found myself in bed with two little children on two sides and the light at a distance. I am sorry, Oh Dream; that thou wert so transient yet so grand,—that thou who couldst enlighten me still more did not condescend to do so.

LIFE.

OFTEN have we thought on thee, Life ! and often been bewildered. Thou art present in various ways in various created things of the universe. Even the most senseless thing has life of its own. But we know not always how thou art. We think of thee and try with all our powers of thought to reveal thy secret. But seldom do we reach it, seldom realise what thou really art.

The meaning and significance of Life ! What a big aim has man set for himself ! Life in all its phases is yielding new and

different meanings, is revealing to different thinking souls its varied significances in varied ways. But its secret seems to be a mirage that ever deludes humanity—a mirage after which the thirsty human soul, in this great desert of the creation where all is unknown, is running like mad.

Infinite are the ways and expressions of Life. Life with its variegated strength, colour and significance is a miracle, nay, the miracle of all miracles in the creation. The earth rolling in an orbit of the infinite round the sun, the sea swelling and falling twice within the space of a day with the strictest possible regularity—the sky brilliant with infinite stars having distinct individualities of their own—what are these but parts of one great life—one immeasurable and unimaginable Self which is the universe? And the little life of men—one, in the infinite sections of the created lives—what wonderful new lives has it brought to light! And who

knows what great possibilities are there in the human soul ! The rolling thunder yielding itself to man's use—the ever-flying and sublime imagination assuming body and shape for his spiritual uplift, the deep and ever-searching thought revealing every day novel glories of truth and that 'light-footed' fancy ever changing and ever attractive—are they not so many lives discovered and enjoyed by the little life of man ? And the very attempt, the very hope, nay, the very imagination that a better and higher life may be felt, realised and translated to action, is only a kind of real and perceptible life, indicating a higher and better life that is to come.

But the life of all lives, natural or spiritual—the soul-force that connects and blends all these various lives into one great whole—where is it ? The rose has life, the stream has life, the air has life, and man—he, too, certainly has life. But are all these lives separate and distinct ? Are they but

points on one great surface whose ends spread up to infinity? Or are they only different manifestations of one great universal Sameness which may be the spirit and life of the universe?

And what is the value of this life of ours—the life of individual man on earth in the midst of the infinite ocean of life—this life of a certain length to be lived with or for a series of experiences—this life of our high aims and aspirations? This is the problem that concerns us most. Is the life that we protect and nurse so carefully in our great struggle for existence and that is so much interwoven and interconnected with other lives that it cannot be lived without them, of any worth and importance? If it be not, why do we live it at all in spite of its infinite trials and tribulations?

Yes, for man this little life of his, even this, is a treasure and premature vanishing of it a misfortune. It is as real as it is earnest.

Even through the small incidents of life which are only so many drops in the great event-ocean of Time, through experiences and occurrences so common, even through these comes the realisation in man of the higher and the better self—a realisation that however poor man physically is, his soul is infinite and is capable of infinite possibilities ; that if his powers are properly nursed and cultured, the secret of existence in its various phases opens itself up before his inward eye. And these experiences may hold up before man a vision not only of the “unlit gulf” of the spiritual in himself but also of the unlit ocean within the whole. It is this that gives the short human life its meaning and significance. It is for this alone that man welcomes adventures, faces dangers and difficulties and sometimes defies the vital enemy of life which is Death. As it is only through adventures and attempts of infinite variety that the human soul can be face to face with Truth. The experiences

of human life—of its pleasures and pains from all possible sources—"the doubts and hazy visitations of the soul"—are all individual and separate existences having their own individual and separate lives, which prepare the field for that one great life which is man's ideal, namely, the life of Truth and without which life in the real sense of the term remains incomplete. And no soul can ever remain in rest till its completion.

"... this is human life ; the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human ; bearing in themselves this good
That they are still the air, the subtle food
To make us feel existence."

Endymion—Keats.

The deeper and more serious these experiences, these struggles, disappointments, wars and deeds, the better and higher the life and the nearer it is to completion. "The last of life for which the first was made' must be

completely realised and it would be a tragedy if death should "bandage any one's eyes" before such a realisation. Man realises his own self—the God in him, as also the great self within the whole only through the experiences of life. And so the poet sings,

"One crowded hour of glorious life,
Is worth an age without a name."

INFINITY.

IF any one has ever betrayed man, yet helped him, has stood in the way of his knowledge of truth and has yet done him yeoman's service in the realisation of it, it is thou, oh Infinity ! Thou hast a gift that exhilarates man, elevates his soul and leads him up to the spiritual. But at the same time thou dost most souls immeasurable harm by keeping them bound even within thee.

How many stars are there in the sky—
how many herbs in the mountains ? How
many waves rise and fall on the breast of

the widest ocean ? Infinite ! all infinite !
Even the number of atoms in a stone ball—
the number of points in a straight line, we
take to be infinite.

Poets say that the human soul is finite—that because it echoes forth the transitory reflections of the infinite from time to time, therefore, the conception of the Creator—thought about His omnipotence and omnipresence—is so sweet. Any how the conception of the infinite which is possible only in comparatively pure and healthy souls is one of the most distinguished blessings of life.

We know men who look at the sky, are amazed at the sight of innumerable stars as they twinkle from the uttermost depth of the sky and gape in wonder. We know others who in such happy moments of complete self-forgetfulness were turned from men to gods. And if all people knew astronomy and could realise it—if they could feel how round an infinite number of centres the constituent orbs

of the universe are rolling in concentric circles—if without aiming at anything else human civilization attempted only at a right realisation of the infinite—only at a conception of what the universe is—how various and infinite its constituents, men of earth would have been disillusioned of a great proportion of their errors and raised to a spiritual sphere far higher than the one they dwell in. Such a conception of the infinite has an unique virtue in itself.

But cannot man penetrate even through this infinity ? Can he not put this screen aside and see the divine Finite behind it ? Can he not feel that taking part by part—counting by the wonderful mathematical power of imagination there is a finite even in the infinite—a limit even of the unlimited ? One may not take the trouble of counting it : but is it after all uncountable and unrealisable ? It may be impracticable to count the sands of the shore and the waves of the sea. But no one

can place the infinities in these side by side with the infinity in the number of atoms in a small stone ball. If one would learn to know and feel the division and classification of infinity, to distinguish between one infinity and another, even the infinity of the infinite which is so vague and rarefied will assume body and shape for him.

But is such a conception—such a realisation of the infinite as the composite of the finites and the finite as only the constituent element of the infinite the ultimate end of realisation for man ? Will going direct from the finite to the infinite save men ? We think not. As the putting aside of the old familiar customs and coverings in the midst of which we are born and bred is essentially necessary for a full conception of the infinite, so must we, by all means have a survey from the sublime height on the plain below, observe all things, all the institutions of the human society from the

infinite and recognise in the individual actions and duties of men something real and significant—something that is worth attempting, worth persevering and sometimes worth dying for. The conception of the infinite as one great Finite—as an aggregate of finites, where each finite has got its own line of evolution and its own way of activity but is yet related to the whole, is the sublimest of conceptions for men.

But when is such a conception possible ? When is it possible for man to recognise himself as something in spite of his insignificance—to feel that his life and death is not altogether nothing to infinity ; but that with his little insignificant activities, his little movements in life is connected the great binding thread of the universe ; that with him as with everything else, the creation moves as the vast ocean moves with a real motion with the least motion of water or as the smallest vibration of the air sends a real, significant,

though small thrill into the whole atmosphere. When can he feel his own individuality—his own significance—the value of his own actions not only in his own miniature microcosm but also in the whole macrocosm of the creation ? When is such a conception, such a recognition of each individual soul as something real in the vast universe of God possible ? Does our idea of the whole as something infinite help it to any extent ? Surely it does. Together with such conception—together with the idea that the creation is infinite and all our science, philosophy, and literature with all their attempts for infinite time cannot exhaust its secrets,—there must only be this supplementary conception—the conception that the universe however infinite to our finite souls, is finite to the great Creator—who is as omniscient as he is omnipotent—finite in the same sense as a star of the heavens and a wave of the ocean are finite to us. Whether the Creator is permeated

through and through it and realises himself through every individual unit, or whether He is separate, and stands aloof from his creation, the whole however infinite to us, however impenetrable and mysterious, is to Him finite, fixed and bound by unalterable laws. When such a conception of God has been reached—when civilisation has realised with the conception of infinity the conception of every small finite as directly and immediately related to and controlled by one great and sublime Finite, the mystery of life will be explained and the problem of existence, so far as man can solve it, will be solved for ever.

We honour great men—the apostles of science, literature, politics and religion, because through the ever-durable beliefs and sentiments of humanity they push home into our soul with the speed of lightning the truth that the great Finite exists behind the apparent infinite—because with their zeal, earnestness and devotion to truth they show the relation

between the small finites and the great One as direct and immediate. We honour a martyr—because he has the conscious or unconconscious realisation or conviction of the great Finite as in direct relation to the smaller ones, because he can die for such a conviction. Let men, oh Infinity ! honour thee as a means to an end—as a ladder to attain the topmost round of the Finite. Transfer to thy superior—the sublime Finite—the homage that is blindly paid to thee. Men will be the wiser and better for it.

ABSOLUTE.

WHITHER wilt thou flee, Absolute ? From the dawn of civilisation man is following thee in all times under all circumstances, through "fair weather and foul." From the beginning of the curse that man got on himself, thou hast ever been the object of his desire. But ever thou fliest and ever in all ages thou hast made man a dupe of to morrow.

Or why art thou fleeing at all ? Art thou afraid that thy glory which is ever fresh and new will lessen the moment thou art caught ? That thy holy radiance will

fade into the light of common day like the ever-present glory of the stars at the unholy sight of men ? Or hast thou the habit of cheating and deluding which thou canst not throw off ?

Science is following thee, it had high hopes ; some have no doubt been realised but it cannot reach thee. As the idea of the infinite penetrates into the mind the enquirers halt. Art is following thee—the arts of music, painting, sculpture and poetry ; each attempts to chalk out a line to reach thee—there is mystery there. And philosophy which began with the high mission of holding thee and translating thee to the actuality of life—is it not moving heaven and earth to meet thee ? But ever thou recedest like the boundary of the horizon and makest thy pilgrims move along the same path on the same circumference. Politics and law can hardly as yet dupe themselves to the belief that they will ever see thee. While, religion only speaks in different voices

that seem utter confusion to the thinking humanity no better than the confusion inflicted on the arrogant seekers of heavenly bliss at Babel. Where art thou then ?

And how long wilt thou flee and leave men in the dim path of enquiry ? Wert thou never realised by any man or any nation on earth and wilt thou ever remain a mystery ? The great thinkers have always said that thou art. They say one day—and that, they further add, will be a great day in the history of humanity—thou wilt really be in sight, not like a mirage which thou often seemest to be, but a cool quiet-flowing stream ever fresh with transparent water. Why dost thou then seem so unreal, so much more like a vision than a reality ? This is how we think.

But thou dost neither flee from man nor delude him as we in our delusions sometimes suppose. Thou art in thy own right position whatever man might think of thee. Thou

givist the human soul which sinned against God but has an aim for His grace, an opportunity of asserting and of exercising itself which will one day absorb or eliminate the elements of the curse within man. The sinner cannot be redeemed and taken into infinite grace except through labour and repentance. He cannot see the Absolute. Like Milton who was however a much purer soul, the ordinary man will be struck blind at the sight of it. Yet, ever in all ages it is man's duty to cover and to measure the distance, between the present point in the march of civilisation and the point of the Absolute.

How far is man from the Absolute now ? They say to infinity every finite number is zero and that mankind has an infinite future before it. But the theory that man began in mystery and will end in the same does not set up any definite aim for humanity. It leaves the most cultured to the same plane

as the least one. To ignore altogether that we have covered any distance between the point of the beginning and the point of the end is a repudiation of all human culture which is something real. It is not impossible to recognise how far the best section of humanity has advanced. It is not again too much to hope that as this section would go further up with time, others would come up to *their* stage of thought, feeling and imagination. If this relative progress is possible, if this be the holy plan of Nature—we are not altogether where we began, nor are we as distant from the Absolute as we were a few hundred years ago. To all infinities every finite number is not zero.

And what is the Absolute that man has in view ? Modern culture recommends after Arnold a harmonious development of all the elements of the mind. But men cannot be free from the strong traditions of their past. Accordingly, the whole human knowledge is

to be something like a complex chemical compound where all the elements of experience and tradition will be distinctly present with their different and individual characteristics and where yet the compound will be something new with properties sometimes widely different from those of the individual ingredients. This combination and harmony which is of the Absolute, is possible—it will only require different kinds of uniting agency. Meanwhile, one tendency will come out most prominently in one section and another tendency in another. Some will have a passion for science—some for philosophy—some for religion—some for poetry—others again, for mere customs and traditions. Some hold that the millenium will be in sight if each nation holds out its own torch of knowledge before the world to the utmost advantage. This makes a little too much of what has already been done. We may rather hold that there are yet new and strange things to come

from the bosom of the unknown—things that are essential for the divine harmony in men—the unity of their souls from which Absolute is not far off. There will be strange shufflings in society, strange breaking-downs of different species of caste system, the culmination of which in one great universal caste will secure the Absolute for man. The artificial and mechanical breaking of castes by certain so-called universal religions of the world will not help the matter much. There will be castes—castes with their new and menacing appearances in almost every department of human thought and activity, which will have to be levelled down and harmonised. Such castes will be based on the feeling of the progress of civilisation and will have to be dissolved only by insights into the secret process of the blending of all component elements of human experience into one great possible compound. The fruit of the tree of knowledge has been a serious curse and to

redeem men from the curse many more Jesuses must bleed.

When such an age—the age of the Absolute—when religion, philosophy, science, politics literature &c. will each of these, smoothen down its individual angularities and eccentricities, show in itself the elements of its apparent enemy, nay, will commingle and combine with others, it is not possible for us to divine. But we know this much that such a time will once be reached and that most of those elements that individually loom so large may one day lose their present glory and freshness, nay, may occupy positions subordinate to that of another and sometimes lose themselves completely in it. The nearer a generation is to the Absolute, the happier and wiser it is. It is our fortune that we have the Absolute in our view and have become conscious of it. It seems we have crossed more than half the way. Have we not already begun to think of all men as of

one kith and kin, and are we not attempting for the welfare of all? God be thanked for it. Thou art not fleeing Absolute but art only in the process of making and realising thyself.

ADVENT.

THOU takest a long time to be born, thou noble child of civilisation. Thou art a glorious birth. We expected thee keenly so long—we who were weary, fearful and crushed under one universal grinding system. Thou hast come as the harbinger of the new era—the dawn of the great day whose fruits are yet to be. Thou hast infused in us a new force and a new enthusiasm, hast inspired us with a new life. We feel at thy birth a relief—one that is almost a new peace. In an hour of need of this fainting, dispirited race,

thou appearest like an angel—a beacon of hope, radiant with the ardour of heaven.

But the time of thy birth is so stormy, so full of fierce fore-shadowings. There are around thee new and menacing appearances, hostile and strong. The quiet halcyon atmosphere that thou requirest for thy birth and growth and that is almost essential for thee is no more. Everything upon every side is full of traps and mines. There is chaos, there is complicated warfare against thee all round. But never stir from thy ground. No, not an inch. Thou art a child of the spirit—one born of the very Essence of which knowledge is composed. The swords of the physical are too feeble for thee. Let therefore the giant Envy 'heave the hill break the shore and evermore make and break and work its will' stand firm and show thyself a child of the great Ethereal Essence.

Let them not say that thou wert too long in the womb, that thine was a painful

birth. Thou only madest thyself brighter and stronger there—fitter to fight with thy environments or to assimilate them than thou otherwise couldst be. They tried to cripple thee, to base thee on the physical—they whose vision does not go beyond to-morrow and who forget the glorious traditions of this ancient philosophic land. They said, "Time cries for the physical. Let us have mechanics and mechanism only". Alas ! what would they have ? Do they forget that body is but a manifestation of the Spirit—that it is Spirit that bodied itself forth before creation and became the Universe ? Let us cry for the spirit and ever have it in its varying forms. The rest will follow.

Others there were who tried to have thee fuller and stronger. They wanted to have the child walk, run and fly all at once. At any rate they were hopeful. Let them not be sorry. Let them not be disappointed.

They will see thee soon in all thy glory and strength. They need only wait awhile and help thy growth.

Grow on thou noble child ! Thou already shewest promise of a bright future. Thy very birth shows it. 'Childhood shows the man as morning shows the day'. Thou seemest to have 'no languor in thy heart, no weakness in thy word, no weariness on thy brow'. At thy voice 'panic and despair flee away'; hope and enthusiasm return. We already feel enlivened with thy beauty, thy grace and thy strength.

Be thou not like 'stars in the deep of the sky', which arise only 'on the glass of the sage'. But be thou rather like 'daylight and sun to be shared and rejoiced in by all'. Let thy glorious form and thy 'far-beaming blaze of majesty' shine on all, on the high as on the low, on the poor as well as on the rich. Let thy Siren voice thrill and inspire all.

We welcome thee to-day as the holy sages of old did the holy child at Bethlehem. We have no verse, no hymn, no solemn strain for thee. Our call is humble, almost a prayer. Do thou hear it. Come, revive and succour us. Give us new light and life.

Blessed be thou in perpetual peace and prosperity. Blessed be he who promised thee to us. He will hear us from that far away distant shore of France. Blessed be he who proclaims thee to-day to the world and he, too, thy baptist who has initiated thee. Mayst thou live long. May they all live long. Amen.

N. B. Specially addressed to the University of Dacca, est. 1921. Lord Hardinge promised it, Lord Ronaldshay opened it and Mr. P. J Hartog, the first Vice-Chancellor, initiated it.

LITERATURE.

WE often mistake the purpose of literature. According to some its purpose is to teach : while according to others its purpose is merely to please.

But what is the ordinary experience of our life as regards the study of books ? We find men reading books both of prose and of poetry. When they take a book in hand they do not think how much the book will teach them or what moral precept it will inculcate. They go on reading the book, complete it, think of its contents and then put

it by. Very few will read books for moral precepts.

But men are pleased by many things. Any breach of a restraint put upon them by society and its conditions may please them. Any latitude given to passions and emotions is pleasing. And, indeed, some of the most strong spirits of the world would see mischief in some of the most wholesome restraints imposed by society. They ultimately become moral ruins. One such is most notable in English literature. It is Byron.

Yet the purpose of literature is to please and, if possible, to teach by appeal through passions, emotions and thought in men. The task for the poet is not therefore easy even from the moral point of view. He will appeal through passions and emotions ; but he must keep himself under due restraint. For appeal through the pleasure-giving elements in men is dangerous if carried too far. The majority of readers are creatures merely of feelings

and emotions and they hardly understand the significance of the healthy restraints of reason and conscience. If such appeals, therefore, be carried too far, men would be misled and the responsibility would lie with the poet.

What should the poet do then ? The most genuine poetry is the most sincere, most spontaneous and the most unrestricted outburst of the poet's soul. Should he condition his spirit, subject his poetic outburst to the circumstances of his time ? That would be a restraint. Should he subject himself to such a restraint ? Ordinary readers to whom pleasure is the be-all and end-all of life would not like any such restraint put upon poetry. They would call the poet under restraint 'no poet,' for he is conscious of his genius. They would say, "we want a natural outburst of the soul of a poet : this and this alone can really please us and can relieve our soul of the shackles and restraints under which it is by

the very nature of things placed, at least for the time being”.

To many minds these arguments of the ordinary readers will seem to be foolish : for according to almost all the modern exponents of criticism the poetic spirit, even at its best, should be moulded by the best form of art. But they, for that matter, are no less natural. The arguments and view-points of ordinary readers in *their* stage of the development of mind are as much probable and natural as those of the modern critics from their own sphere of thought.

They ought not to be blamed but should be helped forward. All are on the same road and are advancing towards the same goal, namely, through the highest of experiences to the deepest of thoughts. Thoughts reached through the imaginations and passions are truer, richer and more beneficial to humanity than the passions and imaginations themselves. Philosophers are

greater than poets, and no one has been or can be a great philosopher in the true sense of the term without first passing through all the stages of the true poet's mood, consciously or unconsciously.

Whither is literature tending then ? Where will its evolution terminate ? Any literature carefully studied from its beginning to its present state will be found to pass through the stages of feeling to the stages of thought, through stages of splendid imaginative outbursts to stages of quiet and peaceful meditations. No wonder, for this is the law of the evolution of the human mind. This is the law by which all are being led towards the same and invariable goal of perfection. A day will come when the whole humanity will have passed through the stages of feeling to the stage of the sublimest of thought, through the stages of what simply pleases us to the stage of what will exhilarate and teach us, or in other words, through the

stages of animality in man to the final stage of godliness. This is the only millenium possible for humanity and for it the whole human race is consciously or unconsciously contributing, in whatever language it might speak or think. It may not come soon ; but it will once come. The highest of poetry will lead to the deepest of philosophy where man will see himself, his place in the great creation of God and will have a true conception of his functions and duties on the surface of the earth. Such formulas and theories of philosophy as have not been distilled from the boiling waters of the poetic fount will contribute very little to the betterment of humanity. It is philosophy realised through the sublimest of *poetry*, taught and practised in life that alone can save men. The age of such poetry has dawned on English literature.

Facts in support of our theory and of the last statement will not be wanting in English literature. Men, according to many critics,

began their speech in 'poetry' at the dawn of civilization. This apparently seems ridiculous. But in one sense it is true. Men were then poets not in the sense that they could compose dramas like Shakespeare or such passionate prose as that of Carlyle and Milton, but in the sense that they were "compact of imagination like the lover and the lunatic." They felt and felt very strongly but could not express their feelings. It is God's will that men must pass through the intermediate stages of language, must assert and exercise their feelings, and in course of their journey be chastened and purified. The goal is a better stage—a stage of pure and divine thought which will bring the golden age. Many such ages may have passed and many will come in future. And the aim of men from one dawn of civilization to the completion of the same will for ever be to pass from one kind of poet to another, from the crudest silent poet to the wisest philosopher poet, or from

the most silent through the most vociferous to the most silent again.

As already observed our theory may be illustrated from English literature. This literature, though recognised as one of the best literatures of the modern world, has not yet reached its perfection. It is still capable of immense development not so much however in the line of Shakespeare and Tennyson as in the line of Carlyle and Browning. Let us begin with early English literature. There were, no doubt, religious poems in it containing the highest thoughts of the Bible. But very few people could understand them, and least of all, feel them. Such thoughts were too early. They were not thought out by the nation itself through the gradual evolution of its own soul. The course of the development of its mind may therefore be better observed through the secular literature which represents the true development of the national soul through the elements of feeling in it. "Beowulf,

the earliest Anglo-Saxon poem extant, is a grand production and presents a passionate outburst of the Anglo-Saxon mind. It is 'compact' of imagination but poor and narrow in its outlook on man and the possibilities of his being. No high philosophy underlies it, no theory, no criticism or true vision of life as such. The age that followed the age of this great epic was an age of prose. A few years passed and another great exponent of poetry showed himself. Chaucer pictured the society of a broader outlook, a greater experience with an intenser imagination. He was a great poet as also were some of his contemporaries. They all contributed to the great national evolution of thought. But they were yet on the common plane, far below the plane of true philosophy. Two more splendid outbursts were necessary to find the true beginning of the poetry of perfection, the beginning, in other words, of poetry that would not only please man most but would

also teach him in the best possible way his individuality and position, his duties and aims in the great creation of God. A prosaic age intervened between the age of Chaucer and that of Shakespeare. A great impulse towards healthier thoughts was imperceptibly given and then Shakespeare came. He was great as a poet of emotions and passions in humanity. His imagination was intense and wide and his representation of the mysteries of human mind was sublime. But, with all respect to himself and his genius it must be said that he could not understand his position in the creation and could not know his duties and aims as man. The ultimate end of humanity was to him an obscure thing. He only felt that human life is a mystery,

We are such stuff—

As dreams are made of and our little life,
Is rounded with a sleep.

Tempest iv 1. ;

but he could not think out the duty of the individual soul. Some would contend that this is the function of the doctor of religion. But this is no less the function of the poet. Religion reached through poetry and through philosophy can alone satisfy the soul. The reconciliation of these three great forces seems at this stage of civilization a thing mysterious and impossible. A time will come when the water-tight compartments of these three will be exploded and one will freely invade the region of another for the healthy development of the spiritual self in man. Even if it might be conceded that Shakespeare understood this spiritual self and its evolution in his later life when he fled from town life to retirement in the bosom of nature in his native village, no one, not even his greatest admirer, would claim that his works set up any aim for the individual soul as a unit in the creation of God. But he did one great service to his nation :

he broadened its imaginative horizon and compelled it to take a large step in the right direction.

Milton came at the close of the age of Shakespeare. He did a much greater service to the nation in general than his great predecessor. He attempted to make the dry bones of orthodox religion live and his aim was to justify the ways of God to men. He carried through his imagination or, to speak in the words of Gray, on the Seraph-wings of ecstasy, the glory of Christianity and its latent truths to such a high region and edified the nation to such a great extent that his place as a teacher-poet is supreme in the history of human perfection, so far as the Christians are concerned. A lull intervened and the prosaic age so called, the age of Dryden and Pope, which however was more truly poetic, came. The products of the imaginations of the previous ages were chewed and digested and the way was prepared for

another leap in imagination. But how different this leap was : how firm, yet how careful ! how poetic, yet how thoughtful ! Wordsworth led the way. He saw life and feeling in everything in nature. All the units of creation, the trees, the herbs and flowers feel as much as we do and can possibly think. They derive more pleasure than we do from life, for they are under less restraint. Most of all, he 'felt' the development of the individual soul and painted in the brilliant words of the Prelude all the stages of a poetic mind leading itself to perfection. There were great poets of feeling in his age, men of wilder, if not of deeper imagination. But even they for the time being were led in the midst of the most splendid outbursts of imagination to think of the value and importance of the individual soul. How imaginative, yet how thoughtful are the last words of Adonais !

'That light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move

...

that sustaining Love

Which through the web of being blindly wove
By men and beast and earth and air and sea
Burns bright or dim *as each are mirrors of*
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.'

The age passed away. Wordsworth and the thinker-poets of his time broadened the spiritual horizon of the English people. Their thoughts and imaginations dived deep into the new experiences and emerged in Carlyle and Browning, still brighter, still more glorious and at the same time more sober and more thought-instilled.

These two great poets, the loftiest spires on the temple of English literature, saw through feeling and imagination, through the experience of life in their own days, the position of man, his aim and the means

to attain it, and tried to fix his duties on earth. Carlyle felt how small man with all his powers is, but had the vision that even in his smallness he had to do great things—things essential for himself and for his fellowmen. He put before man the standard of duty and with a loud voice proclaimed : ‘The Golden age which a blind tradition has placed in the past is in the future,’ and the millenium would be reached the sooner if every man recognised and performed his duties. ‘Oh Heaven ! it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future ghost within him but are in very deed ghosts ! These limbs whence had we them ; this stormy force ; this life-blood with its burning passion ? They are dust and shadow, a shadow-system gathered round our ‘Me’ wherein through some moments or years the Divine Essence is to be revealed in flesh. That warrior on his war-horse ; fire flashes through his eyes ; force dwells in his arm and heart ; but warrior and war-horse

are a vision, a revealed force, nothing more. Stately they tread the earth, as if it were a firm substance ; fool ! the earth is but a film ; it cracks in twain and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's ! Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago they were not ; a little while and they are not, their very ashes are not.'—
Carlyle, Sartor Resartus.

Even in the midst of this grand conception of the universe and its activities Carlyle tried to chalk out man's duty. He wrote in prose but his expressions are poetry. He was the greatest of the thinkers of the nineteenth century but he was also one of the greatest of its poets. The functions of the poet the philosopher and the priest combined in him and he was therefore a greater poet in the true sense of the term than any of his predecessors. After Carlyle the greatest of thinker-poets was Browning. His *criticism* or true vision of human life was more clear and more deep.

He felt the evolution of the individual soul. Man, according to him, would be judged not by his actions without but by his actions within, and the greatness of an individual would be judged by his thoughts and feelings and even by the little imaginings that are constantly playing in his mind. The ideal is *completion*.

“That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it :

This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.

That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit :

This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit”

Browning, “A Grammarian's Funeral.”

The conception of man's future and his evolution reached through poetry by Browning will throw much light in the way of the future poet-philosophers, and following the footsteps of Browning and Carlyle the English nation

will come to a better and truer conception of individuals, their duties and their ultimate good. Bright days are coming for the English people when through poetry they will come to the sublime conception of poetry and philosophy and even religion as having one and the same aim in spite of the distinctive individualities of their own, apparent at the present time.

From what has been said we believe the aim of literature has been made clear. It is to bring the highest and deepest of thoughts, through the grandest and sublimest of imaginations and passions, to attain the truest and purest conception of humanity and its ideal through the most pleasing and exhilarating elements of the human mind, and to infuse a spirit of respect and veneration in man for the ideal so conceived, or, in other words, it is to solve the mystery of life—the great problem of existence which men are attempting to seek out and solve from time immemorial and which will one day be explained not to one

nation or country through one literature but to all the human beings on the surface of the earth. The realisation of this ideal is an act of time, and the signs of the time show it will once come. "The golden age, which a blind tradition has placed in the past is in the future."

SILENCE.

WE honour thee Silence ! and thou art honoured everywhere. In a talkative company thy dignity is visible. And often in life we find that the silent answer is more effective than the vocal.

Thou art one of the most powerful attributes of the human soul. If one has a soul, a spirit—he need not be anxious to impart it to others—it will impart itself. A real perfume will diffuse itself into the whole room. Real silence will speak through a thousand voices. It will serve more than the purpose of speech.

What an enthusiasm have we for the history of speech ! It carries our mind back to the dawn of civilization ! It perplexes us ; it sets our scholars to research. Some risk all their strength—all their power of insight for it. Indeed, it establishes a liberality impossible of realisation by any other means. But when will men study the more important thing—the history and evolution of Silence ?

And Silence speaks of itself in a thousand voices. Consult history—see how the most important of its events were planned in silence and formed themselves silently. Consider literature—see how the best poet is the most reserved ; his spirit can hardly find sufficient expression in language. The attributes of the soul are infinite—language with all its developments is finite. Consider philosophy—the greatest of philosophers have always been faced with mystery or rather have been inspired by it. And religion : has anyone uptill now reached

its depths by mere vocality ? It is formed and nursed in silence and its expressions are more of the sphere of silence than of speech. Note but the parables of Christ. Can anyone analyse their significance—the incomparable appeal that they make to the human soul ? Christ himself died silently : so did Buddha. Millions of trumpets could not proclaim their teachings better.

And are not all geniuses, all inspired men of the world in different spheres of activity, in one word silent ? May not the word 'silent' be 'writ large' on their foreheads as the insignia of power ? The great philosophers and poets, above all, the heroes of religion were all more thinkers than talkers. They have indeed talked and tried to express themselves. But the proportion in them of the spirit within to the voice without is infinitely large. No visible standard can measure it. Shakespeare wrote about forty dramas—he had the spirit of silence to write

four hundred. He left the stage and its business when he fully felt the divine silence in him. Carlyle gave out one Sartor Resartus—he had more in his soul. It would be a mistake to think that he could embody the whole silence that inspired it in one.

And why do we study poets, philosophers, and men of religion ? Is it not more to learn the nature of the silence in them than to know their speech—more to study their soul of which the expression must necessarily have been incomplete in a few products than to learn such ‘expression’ ? The realisation of such silence is more elevating, more exhilarating than the best speech of the authors :

“Can ye make with marble, with colour,
with word

What charmed you in others relive ?

* * * * *

Can the image of life have the glow
The motion of life itself” ?

And who is the most silent of all ? Is it he who stands afar from all contact with knowledge and willingly confines himself in a sphere of stupidity and ignorance ? Is it he who fears to fight the battle of righteousness and justice, trembles to put his hand on the spokes of the mighty wheels of ever-fruitful time—who avoids struggles and experiences of life breathing only of a 'fugitive and cloistered' atmosphere where the powers of his soul can hardly be asserted and exercised ? Certainly not. The most silent, the most divinely silent is he who has known most, thought most, felt most and yet prefers to remain silent, or rather cannot help doing so. It is he who has realised that through speech itself and its various powers, virtues and significances the divine silence has got to be realised. A word of such a man, nay, sometimes a syllable works more than volumes of books written by others. For in such cases the spirit speaketh unto the spirit even when the voice is not.

And did not the whole creation rise out of silence ? Is not its evolution from one silence to another ? Chaos was a stormy creation of the eternal silence God, and from chaos rose the whole creation. The great vociferousness of the universe in the midst of which all human language and machinery of expression is but a faint indistinguishable sound will one day vanish into nothingness—will seem but ‘such stuff as dreams are made of.’ The sound everywhere is only of the middle, neither of the Beginning nor of the End. Before it was Silence and after it will also be Silence.

Silence is therefore the most prominent characteristic of the Deity. Know Him through justice—He is silent : know Him through mercy—He is silent : know Him through His administration of the universe—He is silent too. Yet He is the wisest, the most merciful—omniscient as He is omnipotent—the author of all speech, all ways and means

of expression. Let human civilization grow from its utmost of vocality or rather through it, to the gradual negation of it, from its speech to silence. Man will be the truer image of God for it. 'Silence is golden, speech is silver,' said Carlyle, and gold contains the value of silver within it. "The golden age which blind tradition has placed in the past" will be an age of divine silence in future.

